

Message Text

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PAGE 01 MADRID 06691 091517Z
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EURE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02

SS-15 USIA-06 IO-13 /072 W

-----030859 091741Z /43

P R 091125Z SEP 77

FM AMEMBASSY MADRID

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1653

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

AMEMBASSY LISBON

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY OSLO

AMEMBASSY PARIS

USMISSION NATO

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USEEC AND AMEMBASSY

E.O.11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, SP

SUBJECT: CONFRONTATION IN THE BASQUE COUNTRY

1. A MASS DEMONSTRATION IN SAN SEBASTIAN SEPTEMBER 8 PRODUCED VIOLENT CONFRONTATIONS AND THE INJURY OF TWO PARLIAMENTARY DEPUTIES. THIS TIME, HOWEVER, THE VILLAINS APPEAR TO HAVE BEEN FAR LEFTISTS, AND THE POLICE WERE NOT EVEN INVOLVED.

2. AN AUTHORIZED DEMONSTRATION IN FAVOR OF TOTAL AMNESTY OF "POLITICAL" PRISONERS HAD SUCCEEDED IN TEMPORARILY UNITING (FOR THE DURATION OF THE MARCH) LEADERS OF THE

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PAGE 02 MADRID 06691 091517Z

SOCIALISTS (PSOE), BASQUE NATIONALISTS (PNV), AND THE BASQUE GOVERNMENT-IN -EXILE, WITH CERTAIN "ABERTZALE" (RADICAL BASQUE NATIONALIST FORCES, NOTABLY THE OLD WARHORSE TELESFORO MONZON AND THE RETURNED ETA EXILES (STILL IN THE COUNTRY ILLEGALLY). DIVISIONS WITHIN THE MARCH WERE OBVIOUS FROM THE BEGINNING; THE BASQUE

PARLIAMENTARIANS OF PSOE AND PNV WERE IN FRONT, WHILE MONZON AND THE ETA MEMBERS WALKED SEPARATELY AT THE REAR. THE MARCH WAS UNEXPECTEDLY JOINED BY BETWEEN ONE AND THREE THOUSAND ADDITIONAL DEMONSTRATORS, FAR LEFTISTS AND VIOLENCE GROUPIES, WHO HAD JUST ATTENDED A MEMORIAL SERVICE FOR A YOUNG BASQUE KILLED LAST YEAR.

3. INITIAL MADRID PRESS ACCOUNTS ARE CONFUSED, AND INDICATE THAT VIOLENCE BEGAN AS THE NEW DEMONSTRATORS ATTEMPTED TO JOIN. AMCONSUL BILBAO REPORTS, HOWEVER, THAT AFTER SOME UPROAR THE NEW ARRIVALS WERE ALLOWED TO JOIN THE MARCH. SHORTLY THEREAFTER THE MARCH SPLIT IN TWO, AS PSOE AND PNV SUPPORTERS DETOURED TO AVOID MARCHING UNDER A LARGE BANNER(APPARENTLY ADVOCATING BASQUE INDEPENDENCE) STRETCHED OVER THE STREET BY ETA SUPPORTERS. WHEN THE GROUPS ATTEMPTED TO MERGE AGAIN A FEW BLOCKS LATER, A MELEE BROKE OUT INVOLVING MAINLY THE UNARMED PARADE MARSHALS (MAINLY PSOE AND PNV) ASSISTED BY SOME OF THE ORIGINAL DEMONSTRATORS, VS, THE GROUP FROM THE MEMORIAL SERVICE. THERE IS NO SUGGESTION THAT MONZON AND HIS IMMEDIATE CIRCLE WERE ACTUALLY SWINGING (HE IS TOO OLD ANYWAY). BUT NEITHER ARE THEY REPORTED TO HAVE HELPED THE PARADE MARSHALS. PNV CORTES (PARLIAMENT) DEPUTY ANTONIO MONFORTE WAS REPORTEDLY BEATEN UP, AS WAS PSOE DEPUTY JOSE MATURANA, WHO ALSO HAD HIS LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 03 MADRID 06691 091517Z

CAR DESTROYED. THE POLICE REPORTEDLY TOOK NO PART.

4. THOSE INVOLVED HAVE DENOUNCED THE OCCURENCE, BUT SEEM INCLINED TO BLAME EACH OTHER. THE PNV AND PSOE PARLIAMENTARIANS HAVE DENOUNCED "EXTREME LEFT ABERTZALES". A SPOKESMAN FOR THE POLITICAL MILITARY WING OF ETA TERMED IT NOT FAVORABLE TO THE BASQUE LEFT, WITHOUT ASSIGNING BLAME. MONZON AND COMPANY ARE NOT YET HEARD FROM.

5. COMMENT: THIS INCIDENT MAY EVEN PROVE USEFUL, IN THE LOCAL CONTEXT, BY DEMONSTRATING TO SOME BASQUES WHO MIGHT NOT OTHERWIKSE BELIEVE IT, THAT POLITICAL VIOLENCE CAN OCCUR, AND DEPUTIES BE BEATEN, WITHOUT THE INTERVENTION OF SINGLE SPANISH POLICEMAN.EATON

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptoning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PUBLIC DEMONSTRATIONS, BASQUES, CIVIL DISORDERS, POLITICAL SITUATION
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 09-Sep-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977MADRID06691
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770327-0485
Format: TEL
From: MADRID
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770981/aaaacqsk.tel
Line Count: 109
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: f84f9849-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 15-Feb-2005 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 1334656
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: CONFRONTATION IN THE BASQUE COUNTRY
TAGS: PINT, SP
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkvgwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/f84f9849-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009